

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 001753

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: EAID, MASS, SA, US

SUBJECT: JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION: CORPS OF ENGINEERS

ASSISTANCE

PASS TREASURY ASSISTANT SECRETARY PARSKY OPENING OF
BUSINESS JANUARY 4

THE FOLLOWING IS UPDATED MATERIAL FOR THE POSITION
PAPER ON THE ROLE OF THE US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS IN THE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SAUDI ARABIA. WITH THE EXCEPTION
OF THE PRESENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION, AND "ISSUES"
PARAGRAPH, THIS REPLACES THE PAPER PRESENTLY IN TAB ELEVEN
OF YOUR BRIEFING BOOK. MATERIAL FOLLOWS:

1. BACKGROUND UPDATE: THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE HAS
ISSUED AN INSTRUCTION WHICH REQUESTS THAT THE DOD EXPLORE
THE POSSIBILITY THAT AID, OR AN ALTERNATIVE AGENCY,
FULFILL THE PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE FOR WHICH THE SAUDIS HAVE
CONSIDERED REQUESTING THE ASSISTANCE OF THE COE.

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2. U.S. POSITION: THE SAUDI REQUEST FOR USING THE COE FOR ASSISTING IN THE SETTING OF CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS AND IN POSSIBLY ASSISTING IN OTHER SAUDI PRIVATE SECTOR PROJECTS IS STILL UNDER STUDY BY THE VARIOUS CONCERNED USG AGENCIES.

3. TALKING POINTS:

A. WE SHOULD TELL THE SAUDIS THAT THE EXPANDED ROLE OF THE COE IS STILL UNDER STUDY AND THAT WE HOPE TO HAVE AN ANSWER SOON.

B. WE SHOULD INDICATE THAT TO SOME EXTENT THE DELAY IS DUE TO THE AMBIGUITY OF THE SAUDIS' REQUEST. THE MORE SPECIFIC AND FORTHCOMING THE SAUDIS ARE IN DEFINING THEIR NEEDS FOR THE COE, THE MORE QUICKLY THE USG CAN RESPOND TO THEIR REQUEST.

C. WE CAN TELL THE SAUDIS THAT PART OF THE DELAY IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT IN THE PAST THE INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE COE HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO ASSISTING THE MILITARY SECTOR OF FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS. THERE IS SOME QUESTION WHETHER OR NOT THE CONGRESS WOULD LOOK FAVORABLY UPON THE COE'S PARTICIPATING IN THE CIVILIAN SECTOR OF ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY.

D. IF THE SUBJECT IS BROUGHT UP, WE SHOULD SEEK CLARIFICATION FROM THE SAUDIS ABOUT EXACTLY WHAT THEY MEAN BY COE PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, HOW MANY COE ADVISORS AND PERSONNEL WILL BE REQUIRED? ALSO, HOW MUCH COE EQUIPMENT AND FOR HOW LONG AND IN EXACTLY WHAT CAPACITY?

E. SINCE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S INSTRUCTION THAT DOD EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES, SUCH AS AID, CONSTITUTES ONE STEP IN OUR INTERNAL CONSIDERATION OF THE SAUDI REQUEST, WE SEE NO PURPOSE IN INFORMING THE SAUDIS THAT THAT IS WHERE MATTERS NOW STAND. WE SHOULD INSTEAD LIMIT OURSELVES AT THIS TIME TO THE SIMPLE STATEMENT THAT THE MATTER IS UNDER CONSIDERATION. KISSINGER

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